

Chapter 1 Purpose of and Need for Project

1.1 Introduction

Highway 101 is the most traveled route in the North Bay area, linking San Francisco with cities in Marin and Sonoma counties before continuing north toward Mendocino County. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA), propose to improve Highway 101 in Sonoma County between Steele Lane in Santa Rosa to Windsor River Road in Windsor.

The project would complete the northernmost section in a continuous system of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes between Mill Valley in Marin County and Windsor in Sonoma County. For this project, the FHWA is the federal lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Caltrans is the state lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The proposed project would construct HOV lanes in each direction by widening the Highway 101 median. Standard shoulders would be provided by widening the outside of the highway. Auxiliary lanes would be added at the southern project limit to match those planned between Steele Lane and Bicentennial Way under the State Route (SR) 12 to Steele Lane Project. The Fulton Road/Airport Boulevard Interchange complex would be modified. Twin bridge structures at Mark West Creek, Pool Creek, and Pruitt Creek would be converted to closed structures, providing a through-area for the inside HOV lanes. The proposed project is described in greater detail in Section 2.2.3, Proposed Project (Build Alternative).

Improvements to Highway 101 are included in local planning goals and policies. The *Sonoma County General Plan* (1989) and the *Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Sonoma County* (SCTA 2004) include the addition of HOV lanes and improvements to freeway standards for Highway 101. Improvements to Highway 101 are also included in the *Santa Rosa 2020: General Plan* (June 18, 2002), which supports widening Highway 101 to six lanes before year 2020.

1.1.1 Scope of this Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report

This Environmental Assessment / Environmental Impact Report (EA/EIR) is prepared pursuant to the requirements of NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA, and CEQA. As required by NEPA and CEQA, this document informs the public and governmental decision-makers of environmental effects associated with the project and describes the measures that would be undertaken to mitigate those effects. This document will be used by federal, state, regional, and local agencies to assess the environmental impacts of the project on resources under their jurisdiction, make discretionary decisions regarding the project, or exercise review and permit authority over the project. It is anticipated that local jurisdictions will use this document in their planning processes to depict the proposed project right-of-way on the land use and circulation element maps of their respective general plans.

1.1.2 Project Location

The project corridor follows the existing Highway 101 in Sonoma County from just north of Steele Lane in Santa Rosa to Windsor River Road in Windsor, a distance of 12.3 km (7.6 mi). HOV lanes constructed under the proposed project would be configured to conform to those proposed or already constructed in other Highway 101 HOV lane widening and improvement projects to the south (Highway 12 to Steele Lane; Rohnert Park Expressway to Santa Rosa Avenue, including Wilfred Avenue; Old Redwood Highway to Rohnert Park Expressway; and Marin-Sonoma Narrows) to form continuous HOV lanes from Mill Valley to Windsor.

The project location and vicinity are shown in Figures 1.1-1 and 1.1-2. Figure 1.1-3 shows the present project in context of other constructed and planned components of the continuous Highway 101 HOV system in Marin and Sonoma counties.

1.2 Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Project

1.2.1 Project Purpose

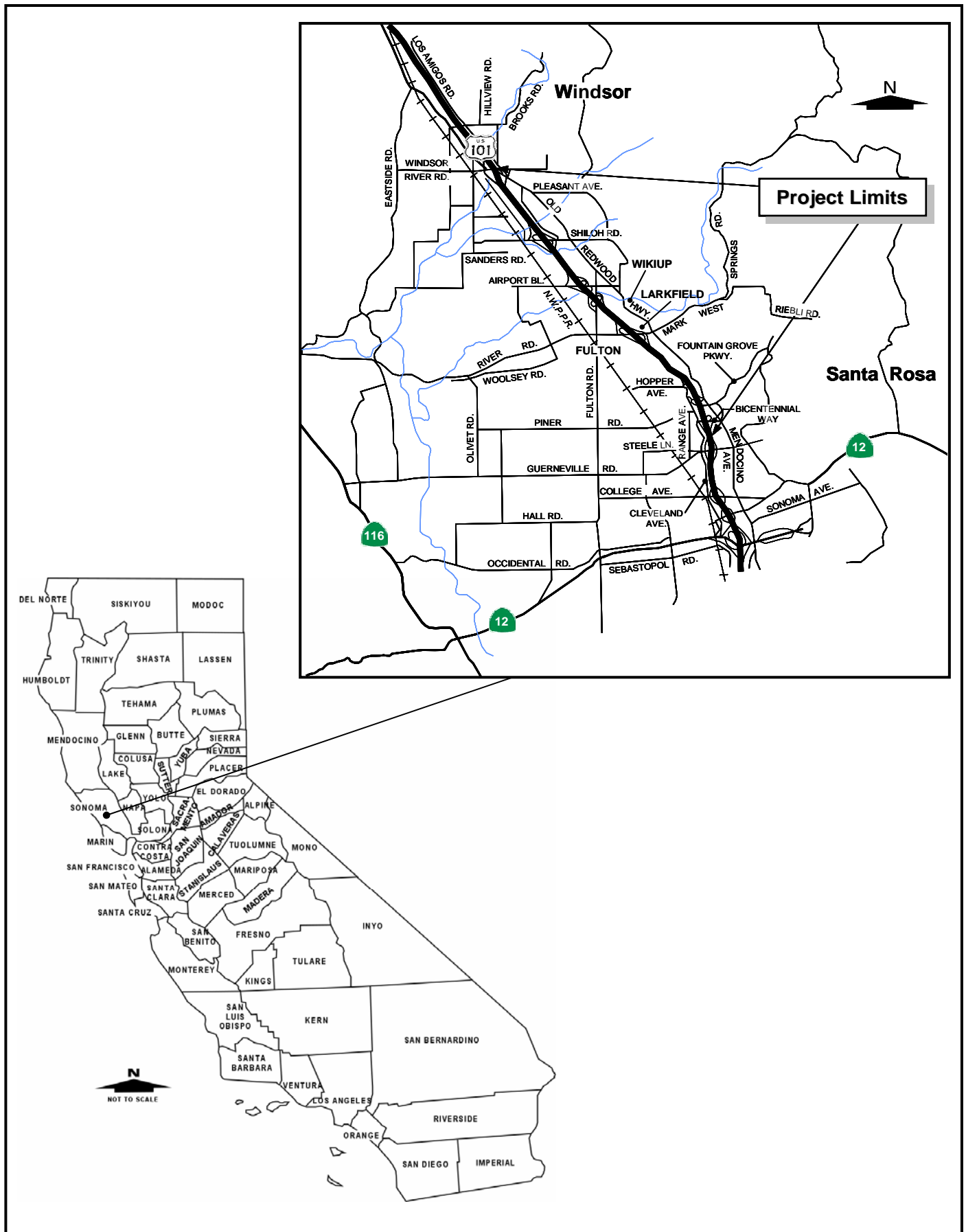
The purpose of the proposed project is threefold:

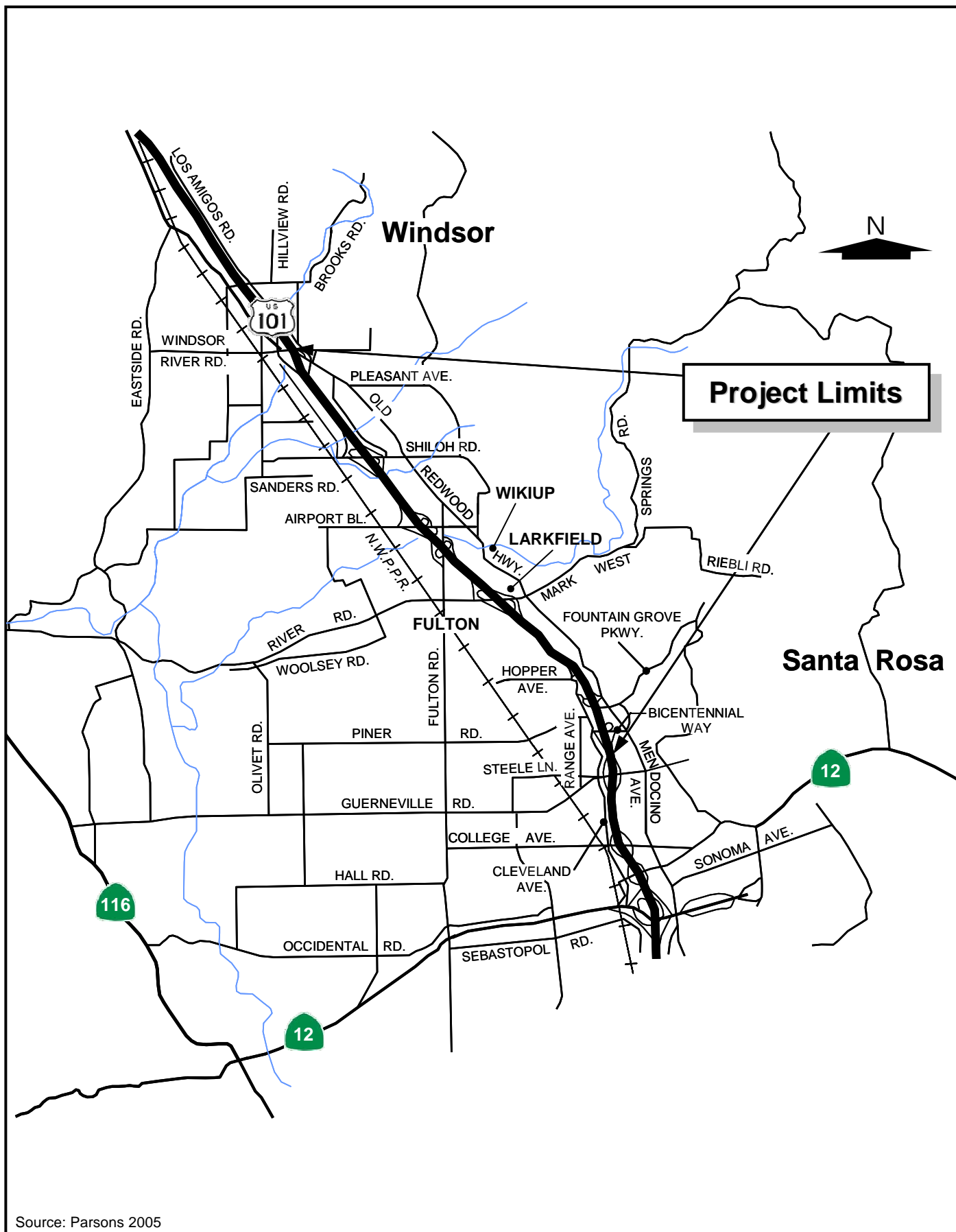
- Complete one of the remaining portions of the planned continuous Highway 101 HOV system, as described and recommended in the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC's) *2002 HOV Lane Master Plan Update*;
- Reduce traffic congestion for motorists and transit riders using the high-occupancy vehicle lanes; and
- Address existing roadway and operational deficiencies.

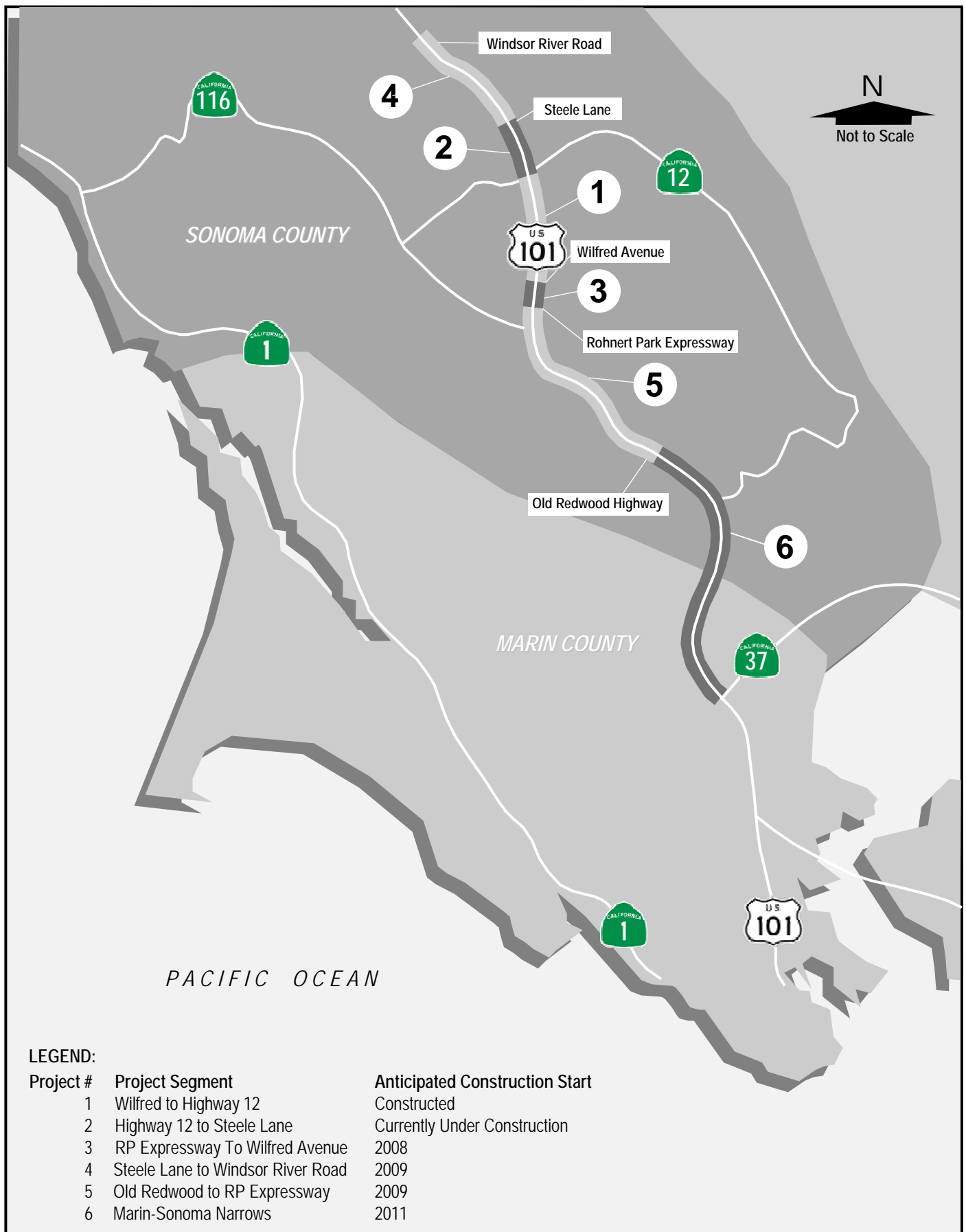
1.2.1.1 Complete a Major Segment in the Planned Continuous Highway 101 HOV Lane System

The proposed project would complete one of the remaining portions of the Highway 101 HOV system, as set forth in the MTC's *2002 HOV Lane Master Plan Update* (DKS Associates 2003). This system aims to provide continuous HOV lanes for a distance of 96 km (60 mi) from Highway 1 in Mill Valley to Windsor River Road in Windsor. Other segments of the Highway 101 HOV lane system and the timing for their implementation are described in Section 1.3.3, Related Projects.

Mainline traffic operations for commuters and tourists in Marin and Sonoma counties would be expected to improve with better access to HOV lanes that cover longer distances between destination cities. Continuous HOV lanes would substantially decrease travel times for intercity buses and carpooling commuters because HOV lanes are typically free flowing in comparison to mixed-use lanes. Providing HOV lanes also would reduce congestion-related delays and indirectly increase capacity for mixed-flow through traffic.







1.2.1.2 Reduce Traffic Congestion and Delay for HOV Lane Users

Highway 101 is the major north-south route that passes through five Bay Area counties—Sonoma, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara. In Sonoma County, Highway 101 plays a vital role in intra-county connections and also connects the County with destinations throughout the greater Bay Area.

Increasing traffic demand exceeding capacity on Highway 101, with annual average daily traffic (AADT) along the project limits ranging from 61,000 to 111,000 vehicles in both directions¹, creates congestion that is commonplace during both the morning and evening peak periods. Current peak-hour travel times on Highway 101 within the 12.3-km (7.6-mi) project limits vary from 7.4 to 11.1 minutes, depending upon the direction and peak period (morning or evening). Mainline speeds in the project area are as low as 84 kilometers per hour (km/h) (52 miles per hour [mph]) in the morning peak hour and 27 km/h (17 mph) in the evening peak hour. Slow travel speeds and prolonged travel times attest to recurrent congestion and delay through the project limits. Without capacity and operational improvements, these conditions can be expected to worsen in the future.

Providing HOV lanes would improve traffic operations on Highway 101 within the project limits and vicinity. As shown in Section 1.2.2.1, Complete a Major Segment in the Planned Continuous Highway HOV Lane System, the new HOV lane would reduce delay and improve travel times for HOV lane users. The HOV lane would allow eligible users to bypass any congestion that develops in the mixed-flow lanes within the project limits. The additional capacity provided by the HOV lane would reduce congestion and delays in the mixed-flow lanes as well.

1.2.1.3 Address Existing Roadway Deficiencies

Design standards aim to offer high quality roadway facilities and ensure the safety of roadway users. Some of the existing features of Highway 101 do not meet current design standards. Other existing deficiencies are operational, inasmuch as they contribute to inefficient traffic movements. Existing facility deficiencies include narrow shoulder widths, nonstandard ramps providing less than desirable acceleration and deceleration distances, and nonstandard vertical sight distance (the length of highway that a driver can see ahead of the vehicle). Operational deficiencies include difficult weaving movements for traffic entering and exiting the freeway and mainline congestion at the Fulton Road/Airport Boulevard Interchange complex that backs up southbound traffic to north of Windsor River Road.

¹ 2003 AADT

1.2.2 Project Need

Caltrans developed the proposed project in response to identified needs. Meeting the threefold project purpose outlined in the foregoing paragraphs would address the following related needs in the transportation corridor:

- Encourage carpooling and use of alternative transportation modes, by offering HOV lanes that substantially reduce congestion and delay for HOV lane users;
- Address capacity constraints and increasing travel demand, by consolidating traffic into fewer vehicles;
- Improve mainline traffic operations and on and off movements, by addressing existing roadway and operational deficiencies.

1.2.2.1 Encourage Carpooling and Use of Alternative Transportation Modes by Reducing Congestion and Delay for HOV Lane Users

For those who choose carpooling and mass transit over single-occupancy driving, HOV lanes provide such benefits as: shorter travel times, less stress from challenging traffic, lower fuel costs, and less wear-and-tear on a personal vehicle. These benefits would act as incentives for commuters and other travelers to carpool and/or take advantage of local and express buses that would move freely on HOV lanes constructed by the project. HOV lanes also would support an increase in express bus service from Sonoma County to San Francisco, recommended in the *2002 HOV Lane Master Plan*, and offer faster and more frequent peak-hour transit service for commuters between Sonoma County and downtown San Francisco. Likewise, the HOV lanes would be beneficial to Golden Gate Transit and the Mendocino Transit Authority which currently use Highway 101 and have routes within the project limits.

Providing HOV lanes would generally improve traffic operations on Highway 101 within the project limits and vicinity. Although the new HOV lanes would improve traffic operations for both mixed-flow and HOV lane traffic, operational improvements would be better for HOV lane traffic, which would operate at or near free-flow speeds, even during peak hours. This would provide an incentive for motorists to form carpools and switch to the HOV lanes. Additional capacity provided by the HOV lane would reduce congestion in the mixed-flow lanes as well.

Travel Times

Currently, it can take up to 11.1 minutes to travel between the project limits during peak periods; travel speeds average around 30 kph (19 mph). Future travel through the project limits in 2030 without the proposed project is expected to take up to 23.3 minutes.

In 2030, with the HOV lanes in place, travel times would shorten for both HOV lane and mixed-flow lane users, depending on the direction and peak hour. Average travel time for motorists in the HOV lanes through the project limits would be about seven minutes for both peak hours and directions. The potential travel time savings with the proposed project for a motorist who chooses to use the HOV lane would be up to 16 minutes, or equal to the average time required to drive through the project limits without the HOV lanes in place (averaged over both peak periods and directions).

Travel Delay and Level of Service (LOS)

Prolonged travel speeds and long travel times along Highway 101 within the project limits are the result of congestion-induced delay. Figure 1.2-1 illustrates the current delay within the project vicinity. While delays during both peak hours in the northbound direction and morning peak hour in the southbound direction are currently less than one minute, delays southbound in the evening peak hour exceed four minutes.

Level of service or LOS is a measure used to rate roadway facilities based on their traffic conditions. Six levels of service are defined for each facility type, varying from LOS “A,” which indicates that traffic flows freely with little or no delay, to LOS “F,” which indicates congestion or queuing. These LOS descriptions are based on the average vehicular density recorded for each freeway segment. As shown in Figure 1.2-1, congested conditions exist in the project limits southbound in the evening peak hour. Traffic operates at LOS E or LOS F in these congested segments.

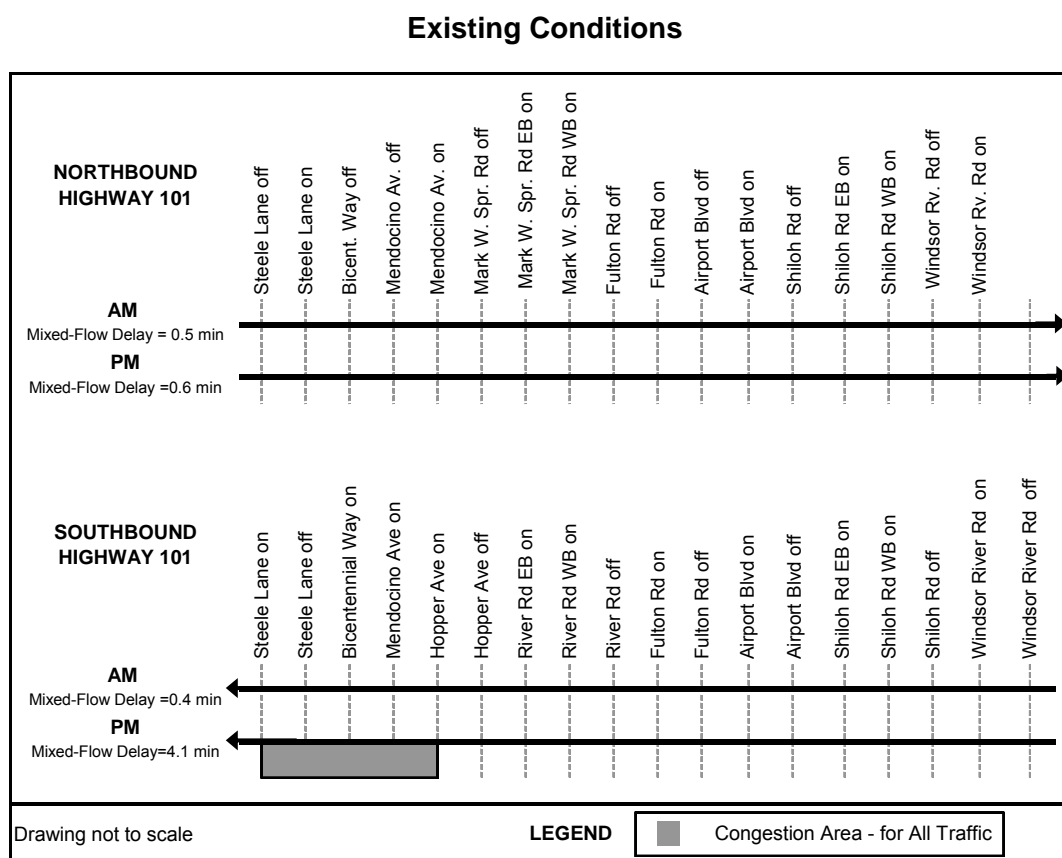


Figure 1.2-1: Highway 101 Total Delay and Locations of Traffic Congestion—Existing Conditions

Figure 1.2-2 shows the congested segments that would operate at LOS E or worse, under the No-Build Alternative. Within the project limits, under no-build conditions, HOV lane eligible users would also be subjected to these congested traffic conditions. As shown in Figure 1.2-3, the project would nearly eliminate delay for HOV lane traffic, allowing HOV lanes to operate at LOS C or better

in both directions under both peak hours. The congestion shown in Figure 1.2-3 corresponds to traffic conditions in some segments in the mixed-flow lanes which would operate at LOS E.

These recurrent congested conditions and travel delays are expected to continue over time. Projections of 2030 peak-hour travel delay on Highway 101 through the project limits without the proposed project vary from 0.6 to 16.7 minutes, depending upon the direction and peak hour (Figure 1.2-2). The reductions in travel delay that would be achieved with the proposed project are shown in Figure 1.2-2 and Figure 1.2-3. The project would reduce congestion and delay almost completely in both directions. The new HOV lane would allow eligible users to bypass any congestion that would develop in mixed-flow lanes. The delay for HOV lane traffic through the project limits would be only 30 seconds during either peak hour for either peak direction.

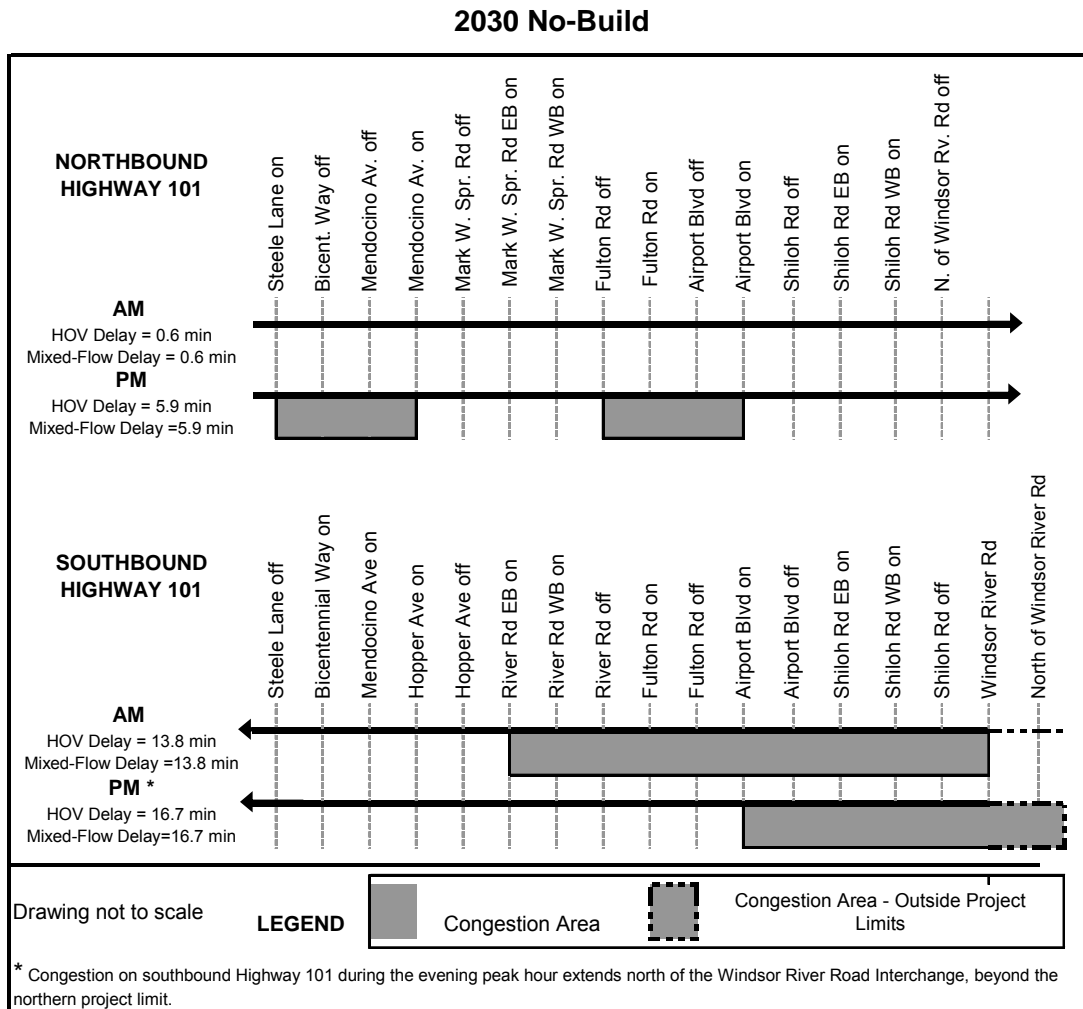
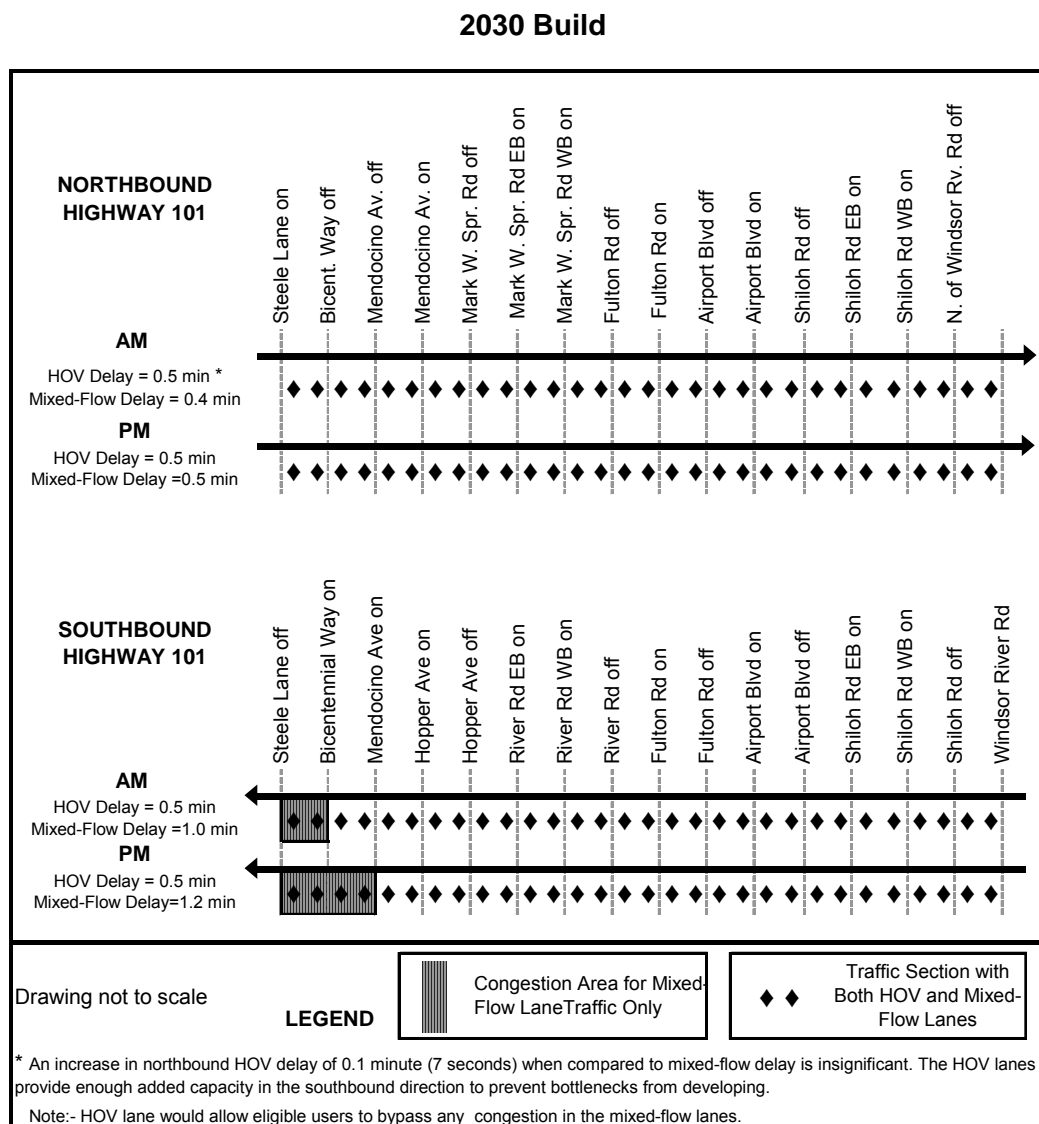


Figure 1.2-2: Highway 101 Total Delay and Locations of Traffic Congestion—2030 No-Build Conditions, Without HOV Lanes



**Figure 1.2-3: Highway 101 Total Delay and Locations of Traffic Congestion–
2030 Build Conditions, With HOV Lanes in Place**

1.2.2.2 Capacity Constraints

Highway capacity constraints add up to back-ups onto the ramps leading onto the freeway, and traffic congestion developing along the mainline. Currently, congested conditions exist on southbound Highway 101 from Hopper Avenue to Steele Lane during the evening peak hour because of extremely congested traffic conditions south of the project limit. These conditions are expected to exacerbate as travel demand increases over time.

Currently, as shown in Figure 1.2-1, evening peak hour congestion, resulting from a bottleneck south of the project limits, extends into the project limits as far north as Hopper Avenue.

Insufficient mainline capacity to accommodate current and projected 2030 forecast traffic volumes means that congestion would continue to develop along the freeway mainline. The proposed project would improve congested conditions within the project limits that would exist under no-build conditions in 2030:

- By adding an HOV lane, improving ramp operations and facilitating weaving movements for traffic entering and exiting the freeway between the Airport Boulevard Interchange and the Fulton Road Interchange, the proposed project would eliminate congestion on southbound Highway 101 in the evening peak hour, from just beyond the northern project limit north of the Windsor River Road Interchange to Airport Boulevard.
- By enabling Highway 101 to serve more traffic, the project would eliminate the morning peak-hour congestion on southbound Highway 101 between the Windsor River Road on-ramp and the Hopper Avenue off-ramp.
- By constructing interchange ramp improvements, including reconfiguration of the Fulton Road/Airport Boulevard Interchange Complex, the project would reduce traffic congestion on northbound Highway 101 during the evening peak hour.

The proposed project would reduce 2030 peak-hour delay at some locations by 97 percent by increasing overall roadway capacity and making the associated improvements. It would reduce delay for motorists in the HOV lanes by from less than one minute to as much as 16 minutes compared with no-project conditions, depending on the peak hour and direction.

1.2.2.3 Needs Associated with Addressing Existing Roadway Deficiencies

Various features of existing Highway 101 within the project limits do not meet current design standards. In addition, existing operational deficiencies affect mainline operations and on and off movements. Correcting existing nonstandard design features would improve traffic operations and provide for more efficient response to traffic incidents.

Address Operational Deficiencies to Improve On and Off Movements

Ramp improvements at the locations noted above would enhance traffic operations and safety by providing standard acceleration and deceleration distance at ramps. Additionally, auxiliary lanes would be maintained in both directions between the Steele Lane and Bicentennial Way interchanges and added at the Mendocino Avenue and Hopper Avenue southbound on-ramps to facilitate the weaving movements of traffic entering the freeway, by allowing traffic to make these moves over a longer distance and at speeds lower than traffic traveling in the mainline through lanes.

Interchange improvements are proposed at the Fulton Road/Airport Boulevard Interchange complex to address operational deficiencies resulting from the close spacing of the two interchanges; these proposed improvements are described in Section 2.2.3.2, Interchange Improvements.

Bring Current Nonstandard Design Features to Full Highway Standards

Highway 101 elements that do not meet current design standards are as follows:

Shoulder Widths

Within the project limits, shoulder widths are mostly nonstandard, with outside shoulders ranging from the standard width of 3.0 m (10 ft) to 2.4 m (8 ft). The inside shoulders are 1.5 m (5 ft) wide, with a paved width of 0.6 m (2 ft). Under the proposed project, shoulders would be widened to the current standard 3.0-m (10-ft) width to provide adequate pull-out areas for disabled vehicles and improve accessibility for emergency services vehicles.

Ramps

Nonstandard ramps exist and would be improved as part of the project at the following interchanges:

- Bicentennial Way Interchange
 - Southbound on-ramp
- Mendocino Avenue Interchange
 - Northbound on-ramp
 - Southbound on-ramp
- Hopper Avenue Interchange
 - Southbound on-ramp
- Mark West Springs Road-River Road Interchange
 - Northbound on-ramps
 - Southbound on-ramps
 - Southbound off-ramp
- Fulton Road Interchange
 - Northbound on-ramp (Option A only)
 - Northbound off-ramp (Options A & B)
 - Southbound on-ramp (Options A & B)
- Airport Boulevard Interchange
 - Southbound off-ramp (Options A & B)
 - Northbound diagonal on-ramps (Options A & B)
- Shiloh Road Interchange
 - Northbound on-ramps
 - Southbound on-ramps

These improvements would facilitate on and off movements. Please refer to Section 2.2.3.2, Interchange Improvements, for a more detailed discussion of ramp deficiencies and ramp improvements.

1.3 Project Background

1.3.1 Project History

Highway 101 was constructed between 1948 and 1968 as a four-lane mixed-flow highway, with the expectation that a third lane would be added in each direction in the 1970s. In actuality, the first Highway 101 widening project did not begin construction until April 2001², even though maximum daily traffic had increased from 15,000 cars per day in 1958 to over 120,000 in 2000.³

Numerous studies, listed in Table 1.3.1-1, have recommended capacity improvements to Highway 101 through Sonoma County. The *Route 101 Route Concept Report* (Caltrans 1986) recommended that a continuous HOV system be developed from San Francisco to Santa Rosa. Phase II of the *101 Corridor Study* (Barton-Aschman Associates 1989) introduced a strategic transportation plan that included widening Highway 101 for HOV lanes from Mill Valley to Windsor with increased bus and ferry service. The *Sonoma/Marin Multi-Modal Transportation and Land Use Study* (Calthorpe et al. 1997) proposed a passenger rail service with complementary regional and feeder bus service and supporting HOV lanes. (The environmental process for the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit [SMART] project began in November 2002.)

The 1998 *Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP)* (Caltrans 1998) designated Highway 101 as a Focus Route on the Interregional Road System (IRRS). Focus Routes are assigned highest priority for completion to minimum facility standards within the 20-year plan period. Focus Routes are included in the National Highway System as a network of primary arteries for interregional trips and access to other states. The plan recommended a four- to ten-lane freeway for U.S. 101 from San Francisco to Cloverdale.

In 2001, a Caltrans Transportation Corridor Concept Report for Highway 101 North reported that Highway 101 did not have sufficient capacity to carry either current or forecasted traffic demand.⁴ Specifically, the report noted northbound back-ups between Atherton Avenue and SR 116 East and from SR 116 West to SR 12. In 2003, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) issued its *High-Occupancy Vehicle Lane Master Plan Update for the San Francisco Bay Area* (DKS Associates 2003). This plan recommended HOV lanes on Highway 101 in Sonoma County between Windsor and Novato where the lanes would connect with existing HOV lanes to San Rafael. The plan put a high priority on increasing express bus service that would use the Highway 101 HOV lanes to move peak-hour long distance commuters from Sonoma County to downtown San Francisco.

In June 2004, SCTA issued its *Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Sonoma County*. The plan outlines three steps to reduce congestion on Highway 101: increase capacity, improve flow, and reduce the number of cars. To increase capacity, the plan specifies adding HOV lanes to widen the highway from four to six lanes. Auxiliary lanes, interchange improvements, and ramp metering were identified as components of flow improvement. Recommended measures to reduce the number of cars included ridesharing, telecommuting, and staggered work schedules.

² HOV lanes on Highway 101 from Wilfred Avenue in Rohnert Park to Highway 12 in Santa Rosa were opened to traffic in November 2002, providing the first HOV lanes in Sonoma County and the first complete segment of the continuous HOV system to Windsor.

³ Correspondence. Mike Kerns, SCTA, to Jeff Morales, Caltrans, October 26, 2001.

⁴ Transportation Corridor Concept Report (TCCR) with Traffic Operations Strategies (TOPS) #1: U.S. 101 North, Golden Gate Bridge to Sonoma/Mendocino County Line, Caltrans, Fall 2001.

Table 1.3.1-1: Related Studies

Title	Agency and Date	Summary
Route Concept Report, Route 101	Caltrans 1986	This report recommended HOV lanes connecting Santa Rosa to San Francisco to alleviate congestion associated with anticipated growth.
101 Corridor Study, Phase II, Strategic Transportation Plan	101 Corridor Action Committee, 1989	Included widening 101 as one element of a balanced transportation plan for the corridor. Recommended one new traffic lane in each direction for HOV use from Mill Valley to Windsor during peak hours.
Sonoma-Marin Multimodal Transportation and Land Use Study	Calthorpe Associates, et al. 1997	Proposed HOV lanes along some segments of the 101 corridor as supporting elements in a multimodal transportation solution.
1998 Interregional Transportation Strategic Plan (ITSP)	Caltrans 1998	Recommended completing Highway 101 as a 4- to 10-lane freeway at minimum from San Francisco to Cloverdale by the year 2018.
Transportation Corridor Concept Report (TCCR) With Traffic Operations Strategies (TOPS): U.S. 101 North	Caltrans 2001	Identifies the establishment and/or extension of the mainline HOV system in Sonoma County as a near-term operational strategy for transportation improvements in the 101 corridor.
Marin-Sonoma Express Bus Study	GGBHTD/ MTC 2002	The study focused on how express buses should fit into the overall multi-modal transportation system for the North Bay over the next 20 years. Four different strategies for implementing express bus service from Sonoma County to Marin County to complement the proposed rail service were evaluated in terms of new daily riders over and above measures of existing express performance. The preferred strategy recommended implementation of one strategy as an interim service until the HOV lanes on Highway 101 are completed between Novato and Petaluma and then implementation of another refined strategy. Key components of the interim strategy include extending the existing Golden Gate Transit Route 101 into Sonoma County; enhancing service, and doubling existing peak hour direction express bus service.
2002 HOV Lane Master Plan Update	MTC 2003	Prepared in conjunction with Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol, this plan recommends HOV lanes on Highway 101 in Sonoma County between Windsor and Novato with complementary express bus service to downtown San Francisco.
Comprehensive Transportation Plan	SCTA 2004	Included highway widening to six lanes as one of three measures necessary to reduce congestion on Highway 101. Other steps taken included flow improvements and reduction of traffic volumes.
Regional Express Bus Study	Caltrans/ MTC 2005	Study results not available.

1.3.2 Funding and Programming

The secured funding sources for this project are from the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), a federal earmark authorized under SAFETEA-LU, and the Sonoma County sales tax measure, Measure M, a 20-year, quarter-cent sales tax dedicated to transportation which was passed in November 2004. The SCTA may also seek to advance funding through Grant Anticipation

Revenue Vehicle (GARVEE) Bonds and/or the State Infrastructure Bond (Proposition 1B) passed by the voters of the State of California on November 7, 2006. Table 1.3.2-1 presents the funding breakdown. Total costs estimated for the project range from \$133.0 to \$136.4 million in 2006 dollars, depending on which design options are selected for the Fulton Road/Airport Boulevard Interchange Complex.

**Table 1.3.2-1: Funding for Highway 101 Improvements–
Steele Lane to Windsor River Road**

Funding Source	Amount
Measure M Sales Tax (Traffic Relief Act for Sonoma County)	\$50.0 million
Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU) Earmark	\$5.6 million
State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)	\$5.0 million
Future STIP (State and Federal Gas Tax)/GARVEE/State Infrastructure Bond	\$72.4 – \$75.8 million
Total Funding	\$133.0 – \$136.4 million

1.3.3 Related Projects

Highway 101 through Marin and Sonoma counties has been the focus of major planning efforts, including the *101 Corridor Study*, the *Sonoma/Marin Multimodal Transportation and Land Use Study*, and the *Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit Commission Study*, that present solutions for solving the transportation problems in these counties. Projects that are proposed as a result of these efforts are listed in this section.

1.3.3.1 Highway 101 HOV Lane Widening and Improvements Projects

The proposed project is one of five Highway 101 HOV Lane projects that are currently proposed or under construction in Sonoma County. Together, these projects complete the Sonoma County portion of continuous Highway 101 HOV lanes from Mill Valley in Marin County to Windsor in Sonoma County (see Figure 1.1-3). The Marin County portion of this HOV system is complete from Mill Valley to SR 37 in Novato, with the exception of the Marin 101 HOV Lane Gap Closure Project that is currently under construction. Part of the Sonoma County portion of the HOV lane system, from Wilfred Avenue to Highway 12, has also been completed. The other four projects for Sonoma County are the following:

Highway 12 to Steele Lane and Steele Lane Interchange Improvements

This project will add HOV lanes, ramp improvements, and auxiliary lanes on Highway 101 between Highway 12 and Steele Lane. Further improvements include new structures, replacement and improvement of existing structures, soundwall construction and relocation, and modification to the surrounding local street network to improve local circulation and access. The Final EA/EIR for this project was approved in December 2003. The mainline and interchange improvements are currently under construction. Project completion is estimated to occur in Fall 2008.

Rohnert Park Expressway to Santa Rosa Avenue, including the Wilfred Avenue Interchange

This HOV lane project would provide auxiliary lanes between the Rohnert Park Expressway and Santa Rosa Avenue Interchanges and ramp improvements. Local street networks would be modified to improve access and circulation. Environmental approval for this project is anticipated in 2006, with construction anticipated to begin in 2008.

Old Redwood Highway to Rohnert Park Expressway

This HOV lane project, between Old Redwood Highway in Petaluma and Rohnert Park Expressway in Rohnert Park, would include construction of HOV lanes and auxiliary lanes, ramp improvements, and modifications at the Highway 101/State Route 116 interchange. Environmental approval is anticipated in 2007, with construction beginning in 2009.

Marin-Sonoma Narrows

This HOV lane project would upgrade the “Novato Narrows” section of Highway 101 to freeway, providing interchanges and frontage roads to replace at-grade intersections and driveways, and make ramp improvements. Environmental approval is anticipated in 2008; phased construction would begin in 2011.

1.3.3.2 Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART)

This commuter rail project develops an existing publicly-owned rail corridor along the 101 corridor from Cloverdale to San Rafael, a distance of approximately 70 miles. The project would include 14 rail stations, including nine in Sonoma County and five in Marin County. The Windsor and Santa Rosa stations would connect rail passengers to bus services that would take advantage of the HOV lanes constructed under the HOV Lane Widening Project from Steele Lane to Windsor River Road. The Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) project is sponsored by the SMART District. The District Board is composed of two supervisors and three city council members from Sonoma and Marin counties and two representatives from the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD). The environmental process for the SMART project began in November 2002; the environmental document was released in November 2005. Rail service is scheduled to begin in 2009.